

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /077 W
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P R 201608Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4511
INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

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PARIS FOR MELONE

LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, IV, XY, XJ
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY

REF: ABIDJAN 4918(NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN A MEETING WITH HOUPHOUET JULY 19, THE PRESIDENT
ASSURED ME THAT CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE IVORIAN
GOVERNMENT WOULD IMPLY NO CHANGE IN IVORIAN FOREIGN POLICY
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EXPRESSED HIS SATISFACTION WITH THE RESULTS
OF THE LIBREVILLE SUMIT, PRAISED PRESIDENT CARTER'S STAND
ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AND URGED THE UNITED STATES TO RETAIN THE
INITIATIVE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. END SUMMARY.

1. I CALLED ON PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY YESTERDAY TO PAY MY
RESPECTS BEFORE DEPARTING ON HOME LEAVE AND TO OBTAIN HIS REACTION

TO THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED OAU SUMMIT MEETING AT LIBREVILLE AND TO THE IMPENDING RESHUFFLE OF IVORIAN CABINET, WHICH IS TO BE ANNOUNCED LATER THIS MORNING AND WILL BE REPORTED BY SEPTTEL.

2. HOUPHOUET RECEIVED ME AT HIS RESIDENCE IN COCODY IN THE MIDST OF A BUSTLE OF ACTIVITY. HIS AIDE, GEORGES OUEGNIN, HAD ADVISED ME THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS MUCH PREOCCUPIED BY THE UPCOMING CABINET RESHUFFLE AND WAS SOMEWHAT TIRED, BUT HAD WISHED TO SEE ME BEFORE I LEFT FOR WASHINGTON. HOUPHOUET DID INDEED LOOK EXHAUSTED BUT WAS HIS USUAL COURTEOUS AND UNRUFFLED SELF. ALTHOUGH I MADE SEVERAL REFERENCES TO HIS BUSY SCHEDULE AND INDICATED THAT I DID NOT WANT TO TAKE MORE TIME THAN HE COULD SPARE, HE WAS IN NO APPARENT HURRY TO BREAK OFF THE INTERVIEW, MUCH OF WHICH COVERED HIS GENERAL VIEWS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST IN TERMS VERY SIMILAR TO THOSE HE HAD USED IN MAY WHEN DISCUSSING THE SAME SUBJECTS WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES MAYNES AND SCHAUFELLE (REFTEL). HOUPHOUET'S PRINCIPAL OBSERVATIONS WERE THE FOLLOWING:

3. THE CHANGES THAT HE WOULD BE ANNOUNCING IN THE CABINET DID NOT RPT NOT IMPLY ANY CHANGE IN THE BASIC LINES OF IVORIAN POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC POLICY. I SHOULD MAKE CLEAR TO WASHINGTON, SID HOUPHOUET, THAT THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE IVORY COAST WOULD REFLECT THE SAME CONTINUITY AND CONSISTENCY THAT HAD CHARACTERIZED IT SINCE INDEPENDENCE. POLITICALLY THE IVORY COAST WOULD REMAIN "PART OF THE WEST," EVEN AS ECONOMICALLY IT WOULD REMAIN PART OF THE THIRD WORLD. HOUPHOUET RECOGNIZED AND WELCOMED THE LEADERSHIP

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OF THE UNITED STATES IN WORLD AFFAIRS AND HOPED AND BELIEVED THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO EXERCISE THAT LEADERSHIP WISELY.

4. THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION IN AFRICA WAS DANGEROUS AND GROWING. ONLY THE UNITED STATES HAD THE POWER--BOTH MORAL AND MATERIAL--TO NEUTRALIZE THAT INFLUENCE. AS HOUPHOUET HAD SAID ON MANY PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS IN AFRICA WERE ECONOMIC AND IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE HELD MOST OF THE TRUMP CARDS IF WE WERE PREPARED TO PLAY THEM. HOUPHOUET BELIEVED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WAS RIGHT TO EMPHASIZE THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. HE DISAGREED WITH GISCARD D'ESTAING THAT THE PUBLIC DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS WOULD IMPERIL DETENTE. THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS TRANSCENDED QUESTIONS OF SOVEREIGNTY. IT WAS, IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, WHAT DISTINGUISHED GOOD GOVERNMENT FROM BAD GOVERNMENT ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

5. THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO AFRICA WAS AN ENCOURAGING SIGN THAT THE UNITED STATES RECOGNIZED THAT THE DESTINIES OF THE UNITED STATES, EUROPE AND AFRICA WERE LINKED. HOUPHOUET WELCOMED OUR INITIATIVES TO PROVIDE GREATER ASSISTANCE TO AFRICAN STATES, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF THE SAHEL, AND HOPED THAT WE WOULD PRESS FOR A MORE ENLIGHTENED ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF

THE INDUSTRIAL POWERS IN THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE. HE WONDERED
WHETHER THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS WOULD SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
IN THESE EFFORTS. STEARNS

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6. BY WAY OF RESPONSE, I GAVE HOUPHOUET A COPY OF THE FRENCH
TEXT OF SECRETARY VANCE'S JULY 1 ADDRESS TO THE NAACP AND DREW
HIS ATTENTION TO SEVERAL PARAGRAPHS DEALING WITH SUBJECTS HE HAD
RAISED.

7. TURNING TO THE LIBREVILLE SUMMIT MEETING, HOUPHOUET SAID THAT
IT WAS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL OA MEETING HE HAD ATTENDED. AS I
KNEW, HE HAD MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT THE OAU. IN THE EARLY YEARS
OF THE ORGANIZATION'S EXISTENCE, IT HAD SPOKEN ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY
IN IDEOLOGICAL AND ANTI-WESTERN TERMS. FOR THIS REASON, HOUPHOUET
HAD BEEN UNWILLING TO PARTICIPATE REGULARLY IN OAU SUMMIT MEETINGS.
THE LAST HE HAD ATTENDED HAD BEEN THE 10TH SUMMIT IN 1973. AT
LIBREVILLE, HOWEVER, THE MODERATES WERE BETTER PREPARED AND BETTER
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ORGANIZED THAN THEY HAD BEEN BEFORE. HOUPHOUET THOUGHT THAT THIS FAVORABLE EVOLUTION OF ATTITUDES IN THE OAU WOULD CONTINUE UNLESS FAILURE TO FIND AN HONORABLE AND PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA CREATED A NEW POLARIZATION. HOUPHOUET'S ONLY DISAPPOINTMENT AT LIBREVILLE HAD BEEN THE FURTHER RECOGNITION EXTENDED BY THE SUMMIT TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. HE HAD SPOKEN AGAINST THIS MOVE BUT THE ATTITUDE OF THE FRONT LINE STATES HAD BEEN DETERMINING.

8. IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS REMARKS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, I ASKED HOUPHOUET WHETHER HE ANTICIPATED FUTURE MEETING WITH SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER VORSTER. HOUPHOUET SAID THAT HE DID NOT PRECLUDE THE POSSIBILITY AND THE SOUTH AFRICANS WERE REMAINING IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH HIM. "THEY SENT A REPRESENTATIVE TO SEE ME YESTERDAY," HE SAID. THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVE--WHOSE NAME HOUPHOUET DID NOT INDICATE AND WHOSE PRESENCE IN ABIDJAN HAS NOT YET BEEN MENTIONED PUBLICLY--TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WANTED TO FIND A REASONABLE COMPROMISE ON NAMIBIA, INTENDED TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FIVE WESTERN POWERS, AND HAD STATED THAT IF A SETTLEMENT COULD BE ACHIEVED ALONG LINES CURRENTLY BEING DISCUSSED WITH THE WESTERN REPRESENTATIVES, SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS COULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM NAMIBIA BY THE END OF 1978.

9. HOUPHOUET THEN RETURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN AFRICA AND SAID THAT IT WAS VITALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE UNITED STATES TO MAINTAIN THE INITIATIVE IN SEEKING A NON-VIOLENT SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. WE SHOULD NOT BE DETERRED BY PUBLIC CRITICISM FROM THE NATIONALIST LEADERS. THEY WERE MORE SYMPATHETIC TO OUR EFFORTS THAN THEY COULD AFFORD TO ADMIT PUBLICLY. AS LONG AS WE PROVIDED ALTERNATIVES TO ARMED STRUGGLE, WE WOULD LIMIT SOVIET OPPORTUNITIES.

10. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, HOUPHOUET SAID THAT HE DID NOT

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IT DOES NOT REGARD THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AS A THREAT TO AFRICA. THE CHINESE HAD GENERALLY HANDLED THEIR RELATIONS WITH AFRICAN STATES WELL AND THEIR HOSTILITY TO THE SOVIETS WAS CONSTRUCTIVE FROM AN AFRICAN STANDPOINT. HOUPHOUET THEN ADDED THAT, DESPITE HIS FAVORABLE PERCEPTION OF PEKING'S AFRICAN POLICY, HE WOULD BE RELUCTANT FOR PERSONAL REASONS TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH TAIWAN. I DON'T LIKE TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS AT THE EXPENSE OF OLD ONES," HE SAID.

11. BEFORE TAKING MY LEAVE OF HOUPHOUET, I ASKED HIM WHETHER HE EXPECTED TO GET AWAY FOR SOME REST IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. HE SAID HE FEARED THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO TAKE A VACATION

OF MORE THAN FOUR OR FIVE DAYS BEFORE END OF THE YEAR.
HIS SON, INJURED SERIOUSLY IN AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT IN FRANCE
LAST YEAR, WOULD BE RETURNING SHORTLY TO THE IVORY COAST. HE
WAS MAKING A GOOD RECOVERY--INDEED ALMOST MIRACULOUS RECOVERY
GIVEN THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE ACCIDENT. HE WAS WALKING WITH A
CANE AND THERE HAD BEEN ABSOLUTELY NO BRAIN DAMAGE. ON THAT
NOTE, HOUPHOUET WALKED ME TO THE DOOR, WISHED ME A GOOD TRIP
AND ASKED THAT I BE SURE TO CONVEY HIS WARMEST REGARDS TO HIS
FRIENDS IN WASHINGTON, ESPECIALLY TO GOVERNOR HARRIMAN, TO WHOM
HE HOPED THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WAS LISTENING
CAREFULLY IN FORMULATING ITS AFRICAN POLICY, SINCE THE GOVERNOR
KNEW BOTH AFRICA AND THE SOVIET UNION AND COULD THEREFORE JUDGE
THE REAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOVIET POLICY ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.
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